

support voter registration and the election process.

One Afghan woman casting her ballot said, when you see women here lined up to vote, this is something profound. I never dreamed that this day would come. And through the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the United States is also helping to create campaign schools that provide leadership and organizational training for women seeking political office. With MEPI support, the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute conducted the first of these political skills training courses for women from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

MEPI and the Government of Jordan hosted a workshop in Oman on Women in the Law in February of this year. Nearly 90 women from 16 countries in the Middle East and North Africa regions gathered to support the key issues affecting women in the legal profession and to develop plans for future collaboration.

At the end of the conference, MEPI announced that it would support two follow-up activities: The establishment of a regional association for women in the legal profession and a public legal education campaign on women's rights and equality. We must continue to strive forward in the pursuit of equality for women and develop on our own success.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY AND THE LONDON BOMBINGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, so much for President Bush's claim that we are fighting the terrorists in Iraq so that we do not have to fight them at home.

The recent tragic terrorist attacks in London disproved that flawed theory. On its very face, the notion that we are fighting the terrorists in Iraq so we do not have to fight them at home is absolutely absurd. For one thing, anyone who thinks the threat of terrorism is not a multipronged threat is kidding

himself or herself. That is why it is called global terrorism in the first place. Because the terrorists have the capacity and the will to strike anywhere any time.

As we strive to prevent terrorism in the Western world, we must not forget the terrorism that takes the lives of innocent Iraqis on a daily basis. And we must not forget the terrorism in Iraq is, for the most part, of our very own creation. Despite claims from the White House, there is simply no evidence to support the idea that the Iraq insurgency had ties to international terrorist organizations like al Qaeda before the United States invaded.

Sure, al Qaeda is doing its best to align the Iraq insurgents now, but would that have happened if the U.S. had not invaded Iraq in 2003? It is clear that the President's notion of taking the fight to the terrorists instead of letting them take the fight to the U.S. is yet another example of the Bush administration twisting public perception to portray the war in Iraq as linked to 9/11.

The truth is that no such link exists. Logic such as this damages our credibility with other nations and hampers our ability to address the truth with facts in the first place. It is clear that the war in Iraq hurts our efforts to combat terrorism in several ways: First, by draining personnel and resources and next by engaging in policies that give the Iraqi people a reason, a legitimate reason for anger aimed at the United States. With the United States appearing as an occupier and with our troops blamed for destroying Iraqi communities and harming innocent people, the Iraqi people are becoming our enemy and many are joining the insurgency.

We have already spent over \$200 billion on this war. And with \$9 billion of this lost by the Coalition Provisional Authority, and worse, nearly 2,000 American soldiers have been killed, and dozens more are being killed by insurgent attacks every single week, while another 15,000 soldiers have been gravely injured and thousands and thousands of innocent Iraqis are gone.

What do we have to show for these devastating losses? What has been accomplished? Very little, I am sad to say. Despite the thousands of deaths and injuries, and the billions of dollars spent, the United States has failed to make Iraq secure. We have failed to stabilize the Middle East.

And as the London bombings demonstrated, we have failed to prevent the terrorists from striking Western cities. The London attacks could have just as easily been New York or Washington, D.C. or San Francisco; so it is not just that we failed in Iraq. This failure has corresponded with failures to secure the U.S. right here at home.

It is time for the United States to begin the process to bring our brave men and women home from Iraq. By beginning this process, we will not only give the Iraqi people the opportunity

to move forward; we will also save the lives of countless American soldiers, and we will free up our resources for protecting Americans right here at home, which is in line with the SMART Security approach.

SMART is a security platform that I have introduced in Congress to provide a Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. SMART emphasizes homeland security, and instead of aggressively throwing our military weight around the globe, SMART depends on diplomacy and good international relations.

It is clear that the war in Iraq has not made the United States safer, but actually less safe. Ending the war and giving Iraq back to the Iraqi people, who went to the polls to take control of their own country, will be a great first step in preventing future terrorism.

Ending the war will help protect our Nation. We are already 2 years behind time in making this happen, 2 years too late. Let U.S. start catching up. Let the U.S. start now.

□ 1945

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.

HONORING SERGEANT JAMES "TRE" PONDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I fully believe that Americans do understand why we are fighting this war on terrorism, and I think that most men and women are like me, and they stand with our men and women in uniform, who know this Nation faces a terrible, evil, evil enemy. All of us realize that to lose is not an option in this war. This is a war that we must win.

While we understand intellectually, while we know in our hearts the reason for this war, our hearts cannot help but ask, "Why," each and every time that we lose a soldier. With each death, a family, a community and a country mourns, and there is nothing we can say or do to make our hearts understand why this has happened. We can only remember the reason that we fight and honor the cause these men and women fought and died for.

Mr. Speaker, we fight for freedom.

As the beneficiaries of these heroes' sacrifices, we have an awesome obligation. We have a responsibility to be sure that this country does not forget our military men and women, our veterans, or forget the cause that they

have chosen to champion. That is why I come here tonight to take a few moments and ask America not to forget our heroes and not to forget the heroes in this war on terror.

On June 28, my community in Tennessee lost a son when Sergeant James "Tre" Ponder's MH-47D helicopter was shot down by enemy fire in eastern Afghanistan. Tre, his wife Leslie and their two daughters, Samantha and Elizabeth, live in Clarksville, near Fort Campbell, where Tre served at the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Airborne. Tre's parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Ponder, Junior, reside in Clarksville. And Leslie's parents, Mayor and Mrs. Tom Miller, reside in Franklin, Tennessee. They are all constituents of Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, a military family lives with the kind of stress most of us cannot comprehend, especially in times like these. Tre and Leslie and their families lived with this stress, and they did so with grace and courage. If you want to know why America is strong, you only have to know people like the Ponders and the Millers, and that is why we have to be sure that all of us stop and honor Tre's life and, in so doing, honor our men and women in uniform.

I want to read a statement Leslie made about Tre. This is what she said, and I am quoting, "Tre spent the majority of his Army career supporting a unit he loved. The 160th was like a second family to him. He believed firmly in the principles ingrained in him from an early age: Loyalty, perseverance, and an overwhelming sense of patriotism. Tre would want to be remembered as someone who died the way he lived, providing support for some of America's finest young men."

Mr. Speaker, in the midst of this agonizing loss, Leslie has issued a statement recognizing Tre's service and reminding us all that it was his dedication to America and our soldiers that gave him the courage and strength to do what he had to do, what he felt called to do.

God bless our military families. They are absolutely incredible men and women. Mr. Speaker, medals and commendations alone cannot capture all that Tre meant to our community or what he did for America. The Nation has awarded him the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star medal. Medals and awards only tell us what we already know, that Tre Ponder was a brave and good man, one of the finest.

To Tre's wife, Leslie, and his daughters, Samantha and Elizabeth, we offer our tears and our thanks. We are so sorry for their loss, and we are thankful for their service and sacrifice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear

hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.

CAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, last year, during the 2004 election season, the Republican leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the most powerful Republican in the Congress, in the House or Senate, promised that this Congress would vote up or down on the Central American Free Trade Agreement. December 31 rolled around, and there was no vote.

Majority Leader DELAY again promised earlier this year there would be a vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement by Memorial Day. Memorial Day came and went, and there was no vote.

Majority Leader DELAY, again the most powerful Republican member of this body or the other body, again promised there would be a vote on CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, and he promised it prior to the July 4th break. Again, July 4th came and went, and there was no vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Now, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) says there will be a vote before the end of July up or down on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

There is a reason that Congress did not vote on it by December 31, did not vote on it by Memorial Day, did not vote on it by July 4th, and still has not scheduled it for a vote even this month. That is because there is strong bipartisan opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement. It is Democrats on this side and Republicans on that side. It is business leaders, small business leaders especially, and labor unions. It is religious leaders. The Catholic bishops in Central America and other religious leaders, Lutherans, all kinds of Protestants, Catholics and Jewish groups, all kinds of religious groups in America that oppose this.

Environmentalists, food safety advocates and people who think the Central American Free Trade Agreement is not working and does not work for the United States of America and does not work for the five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic; they understand we do not want this CAFTA. We want a new CAFTA. We want to renegotiate CAFTA so it will work for small farmers and ranchers, for small manufacturers in my State of Ohio, in Cincinnati and Dayton and Portsmouth and Chillicothe. They understand that this was a trade agreement that was negotiated by a select few for a select few.

Sure, Mr. Speaker, there are people that support the Central American

Free Trade Agreement in addition to Majority Leader DELAY and President Bush. The pharmaceutical companies love this agreement because they helped to negotiate it. As I said, it was crafted by a select few for a select few, and the drug industry is one of the select few. The insurance industry loves CAFTA. Again, it was crafted by a select few, the insurance industry and a few others, for a select few. The banks and the other financial institutions love CAFTA. It was negotiated by a select few, and they were at the table, for a select few, for them and a few others.

The largest corporations in the country, many of them like CAFTA because it was negotiated by a select few for a select few, not for small manufacturers in Akron, Ohio; not for small manufacturers in Steubenville, Ohio; but for large corporations that can move their production overseas and exploit cheap labor.

When you think about it, the major reason that Americans are opposed to the Central American Free Trade Agreement in every poll you look at and that a majority Members of Congress are against CAFTA is, look what has happened with our trade policy in the last 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, I am joined by my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL), who understands this so very well, and my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) will be here in a moment. If you look at 1992, the year I just happened to run for Congress the first time and get elected, in 1992, our trade deficit was \$38 billion. That means the United States imported \$38 billion more than we exported. We had a negative trade balance, import versus export, of \$38 billion. Last year, our trade deficit was \$618 billion. It went from \$38 billion to \$618 billion in the space of 12 years. It is hard to argue we should do more of the same.

CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, is a dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA passed here in 1993. Look what happened. Then PNTR for China and a whole host of trade agreements as the trade deficit got worse and worse and worse and worse. It has clearly not worked for our country.

Let's look back for a moment at CAFTA to see what has happened. Thirteen months ago, the President signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement with the other six countries, five in Central America and the Dominican Republic. Every other trade agreement the President signed was voted on, Morocco, Chile, Australia, Chile, and Singapore, was voted on within 60 days of the President's signature. CAFTA was signed in May of 2004. It has been more than 13 months, six times plus, six times longer than any of these other trade agreements. Again, because Americans and their congressional representatives, and that is why we are called representatives,